

CITY OF RIVERSIDE
2000-2005 HOUSING ELEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

A. Community Context

Over the past half century, Riverside has undergone extensive changes. Once a small agriculturally-oriented community of approximately 50,000 persons in 1950, Riverside has become the 11th most populated community in the State of California, with an estimated population exceeding 250,000. Significant population growth brings changes in age characteristics, race and ethnicity, household income, and other household characteristics affecting housing need.

Important demographic shifts are occurring in Riverside that impact housing needs. The population today is gradually aging and experiencing increasing ethnic diversification, with significant increases in both the Asian and Hispanic populations. The City is comprised primarily of families (72%), with the largest percentage increase being in single parents with children and unrelated households. These demographic trends are anticipated to continue through the next decade.

The City's large job base, coupled with historical, educational, and cultural amenities make Riverside a desirable place to live. The City offers a diverse range of housing opportunities, ranging from residential agricultural to low density hillside and estate housing to medium and high density housing near the downtown areas. The median price for single family homes was \$133,000 in 1999 and apartment rents range from a median of \$530 for a 1-bedroom unit to \$825 for a 3-bedroom unit.

The City's housing stock is characterized as primarily single-family homes (67%), followed by multi-family units (30%), with the remaining 3% being all other units. Of the single-family housing stock, approximately 75% have three or more bedrooms. The reverse holds true for multifamily units, where only 4% have three or more bedrooms. The City also has a relatively small number of condominiums (3,500), possibly due to the generally lower cost of single-family detached homes.

Improvements in the Inland Empire economy continue to affect the housing market, resulting in declining vacancy rates among apartments. Coupled with increased enrollment at local universities and improving incomes, rent levels have risen 5% annually over the past two years. In the real estate market, single-family home values have begun to recover losses during the real estate crash in the early 1990s.

According to SCAG's regional housing needs assessment for 1998-2005, there is a significant level of existing and future housing need. In terms of existing housing need, there is a significant proportion of households with lower income in Riverside. Of that total, approximately 52% of seniors, 27% of small families, 38% of large families, and 44% of all other households earn lower income. These households are particularly vulnerable to problems of overcrowding and overpayment.

INTRODUCTION

SCAG's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) identifies existing housing needs that show a mismatch between the City's supply of and demand for housing. From 1980 to 1990, the overpayment rate increased slightly to 36%; however, it is concentrated among renters (48%), senior renters (63%), lower income families (67%), and unrelated households (78%). Overcrowding also doubled to 10%, but is concentrated among lower income households (17%) and large families (64%).

Overpayment and overcrowding particularly impact large families and unrelated households. In 1990, Census data show that there are 4,600 lower income large families, but only 1,100 apartment units with 3 or more bedrooms that could reasonably accommodate them. Moreover, unrelated households (e.g., college students) often double up due to their limited income. These issues should continue into the next decade, with significant increases in students at local universities.

Other special needs populations also require housing and related support services. Single parents with children have increased rapidly during the 1980s. The City's homeless population is estimated at 1,300-3,400 persons, while the availability of emergency and transitional shelter is well below demand. Additional assisted housing opportunities are needed to meet the demand for senior housing, in particular given the return of assisted multifamily developments to market rents.

With the start of the new millenium, the City of Riverside is faced with important housing issues for maintaining the General Plan's Vision of a Quality City. Some of the guiding principles as set forth in the General Plan are:

- To provide sufficient housing to accommodate household growth, to replace housing units lost through normal attrition and to provide for an appropriate level of vacancies which balance economic and social considerations;
- To ensure the opportunity for all households in the City to obtain affordable housing that is suitable to their particular needs, by removing burdensome government constraints and eliminating housing discriminatory practices;
- To provide for housing and shelter that is accessible and appropriate to households with special needs, including the physically disabled, elderly population, homeless, single parents with children, and students; and
- To provide sound quality housing, desirable neighborhood setting, and encourage appropriate housing reinvestment which is designed to contribute, maintain, and enhance the quality of life for Riverside's residents.

This Housing Element provides policies and programs to address housing issues within a framework consistent with Riverside's vision statement in the General Plan.

B. Organization of the Housing Element

The Housing Element is a five-year housing plan extending from 2000 through 2005. This Housing Element identifies policies, programs and objectives that focus on the following issues: 1) conserving and improving existing affordable housing; 2) providing adequate housing sites; 3) assisting in the development of affordable housing; 4) removing governmental and other constraints to the housing development; and 5) promoting equal housing opportunities for all segments of Riverside's population.

The Housing Element consists of the following major components:

- An analysis of the demographic, household, economic, and housing characteristics and trends (Section 2);
- A review of potential market, governmental, and environmental constraints to meeting the City's identified housing needs (Section 3);
- An evaluation of the land, financial and administrative resources available to address Riverside's housing goals (Section 4); and
- A statement of the Housing Plan addressing the City's identified housing needs, including housing goals, policies and programs (Section 5).

C. Data Source and Methods

In preparing the Housing Element, various sources of information are consulted. The 1990 Census provides the basis for population and household characteristics. Although dated, no better source of information on demographics is widely accepted. In addition, the 1990 Census must be used in the Housing Element to ensure consistency with other Regional, State and Federal housing plans. However, several sources are used to provide reliable updates of the 1990 Census.

- Population and demographic data is updated by the Department of Finance; the 1994 American Housing Survey, and 1998 school enrollment information.
- Housing market information, such as home sales, rents, and vacancies, is updated by property tax assessor's files and city surveys.
- Local and County service agencies are consulted for information on special needs populations, the services available to them, and gaps in the system.
- Lending patterns for home purchase and home improvement loans are analyzed from financial lending institutions.
- Housing condition information, including information on vacancy rates and housing conditions, is provided by the 1994 American Housing Survey.

D. Public Participation

The City of Riverside has ensured that all segments of the population, including lower-income households, were engaged in the preparation of the Housing Element. The City appointed a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), made up of representatives from the Riverside Housing Development Corporation (which advocates housing for lower-income persons), the deaf and disabled community, realtors and finance industry, local developers, the Chamber of Commerce, and residents as well. The CAC assisted in developing the housing needs assessment, reviewing the draft Housing Element, and providing comment and input on its goals, policies, and programs.

Upon completion of the Draft Element, copies were available for review in City Hall and the public library, as well as at various agencies representing different groups. Specifically, copies were sent to: the Riverside Volunteer Center (homeless), Janet Goeske Center (seniors), Parks and Recreation Office (seniors and low-income households), UC Riverside and La Sierra University. Copies were also sent to each member of the CAC. By providing residents the opportunity to review and comment on the City's draft Housing Element and recommend strategies for adoption, representatives from all economic segments were included in the process.

The 2000-2005 Housing Element was then sent to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for their review. Comments received from HCD were incorporated into the document. After review by HCD and incorporation of comments, the City issued notices for public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council. Notification was sent directly to the Citizens Advisory Committee as well as other interested parties. Public comments could be received on the Housing Elements during both public hearings. Comments received at both of these public meetings were incorporated into the final 2000-2005 Housing Element.

E. Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

The City's Housing Element is part of the Riverside General Plan. Other Elements included in the General Plan are as follows: (1) Resource Conservation; (2) Community Enhancement; (3) Community Area Plans; and (4) Growth Management, with special sections for Community Area Plans and implementation strategies. The Housing Element is consistent with land use, circulation, and open space policies contained in each Element. As modifications are made to the General Plan through time, the City will review the Housing Element to ensure continued consistency.